

*from letters from members and
officers the San. Com.*

✓
SANITARY COMMISSION.

The Executive Committee of the Sanitary Commission think it their duty to inform the public, that the demands upon the Treasury of the Commission, and upon its depots of supplies, have never been so large as at the present time, and that the sick and wounded of the Army are still in the most pressing need of the aid the People has thus far so liberally supplied them through the agency of the Commission.

Since the 1st September the Commission has expended six thousand dollars and upwards in the purchase of supplies, which have been distributed by its Inspectors and by members of the Commission on the battle-fields of Virginia.

They have also thus distributed stores to a vastly larger amount, which have been contributed directly to its depots by their patriotic fellow-citizens in every loyal State. Notwithstanding the generous support that has been rendered the Commission, its present expenses far overrun its receipts. And, although, it is daily relieving a fearful amount of suffering, and saving many lives, it is now and long has been obliged to witness a far greater amount of suffering and of death, which it has never had the means to relieve. What it has done, is but little compared with what it could do, had its resources been at all adequate to its work. The more money it commands, the more Hospital supplies, restoratives, and beneficent material of every kind, it can apply to the relief of the Army.

*[Appeal of the exec-com. for
Contrib. & Supplies. With extract
New York, Sept. 11, 1862]*

It may be said that Government should do all this. Were this true, its default would not justify us in leaving our soldiers to perish. But it is only partially true. While active military operations are in progress, and especially at the close of great battles, the prompt and thorough relief and treatment of the sick and wounded requires an amount of force, in men, material, and transportation, which no Government has hitherto been able to keep permanently attached to its medical department. At such times, volunteer aid from without is indispensable to prevent the most fearful suffering and waste of life, however faithful and untiring the Medical Staff may be. Such aid must be organized, to be economical and efficient, and the Commission, with its officers and agents on the ground, experienced in their duties, and in confidential communication with the military authorities, is the best organization through which the sympathy and affection of the people can reach and relieve the People's Army.

It is obvious also, that the accidents of war must often prevent the supplies of the Army Medical Department from reaching the point at which they are required, or delay their arrival until too late. Such accidents have occurred during our recent battles.* The lives of our volunteers are surely valuable enough to justify the people in giving them an additional source of help in their extremity, and in maintaining an auxiliary organization which can, to some extent, at least, make up for the accidental deficiencies and failures that must be expected from time to time in the Medical service of the army. Extracts are published herewith, from private letters lately received by members of the Committee, from their colleagues and agents now in active service with the army. From these will sufficiently appear what the Commission is



* See Letter No. 1, published at end.

endeavoring to do, and how far it is desirable, for the sake of the army and of the country, that its work be continued and extended.

The following articles of Hospital Clothing and other supplies are especially and urgently required :

SHEETS,

WOOLLEN SHIRTS, DRAWERS, AND SOCKS,

FLANNEL AND OTHER BANDAGES,

LINT,

PILLOWS (Feather), of medium size. They are invaluable in bringing men with broken limbs from the field of battle.

Wines, Spirits, Farinaceous Food, Condensed Milk, Beef Stock for Soup, Boston Crackers, Canned Fruits, Preserved Meats and Vegetables.

Cast-off Outer Clothing, Coats, Pantaloon, Vests, of any material, are of great use.

These should be addressed to the "Women's Central Association of Relief, No. 10 Cooper Institute, New York ;" "New England Relief Association, 22 Summer street, Boston ;" "WM. PLATT, Jr., Superintendent of Philadelphia Agency, 1235 Chesnut street, Philadelphia ;" or to "R. M. LARNED, South Water street, Providence, R. I."

Contributions in money may be addressed to G. T. STRONG, Treasurer, 68 Wall street, or 498 Broadway, New York.

HENRY W. BELLOW, D.D.,	} Executive Committee.
FREDK. LAW OLMSTED,	
WM. H. VAN BUREN, M.D.,	
WOLCOTT GIBBS, M.D.,	
GEO. T. STRONG,	

New York Agency, 498 Broadway, Sept. 11, 1862.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS OF THE SANITARY COMMISSION.

I.

SIR,—

I have to report that we started from Washington, with our wagons laden with sanitary stores, on Saturday evening, and reached the line of our army, at the foot of the Centreville Hills, at 8 o'clock next morning (Sunday, August 31st). It was a ride of only 30 miles, but delayed by the trains and crowds that were moving in both directions, towards the front and rear. At the summit of the hill, just this side of Centreville, I came upon a train of fifty or sixty ambulances stationed in the rear of one of the old rebel redoubts, the enemy's shells being expected every moment. On communicating with the surgeons on the ground and with the wounded, I learned that there was a lamentable lack of medical and sanitary stores, the supplies having been cut off by the raids of the enemy. Forty-two wagons laden with medical stores were captured at Manassas. Many of our wounded soldiers had been without food for two days, and were soon to start for Alexandria and Washington, over a rough and stony road, at the mercy of merciless insubordinate ambulance drivers. My wagon loads of crackers and of pure and honest stimulants were soon cheering the eyes and comforting the exhausted nerves of many; some arranged on the narrow couch of the ambulance, others lying on the wet ground, with no covering above them or rubber-cloth under them, waiting their turn and looking anxiously to the nearest ambulance as to a haven of rest.

As the field of the battle of Saturday was in the hands of the enemy, it was not possible, without much delay, to carry out the original plan of reaching the wounded still there, and it was the opinion that I would not be permitted to enter the lines of the enemy. The need of stores at Centreville, and in the very streets, where surgical operations were going on and the wounded lying about, was so apparent, that there was no question as to present duty. Most of the houses of that dilapidated village were already occupied as hospitals, and a room was not to be had. I, therefore, appropriated an old hay rack and a section of the rough sidewalk for my depot, and my boxes were soon arranged and opened. I had conferred

with Dr. —, the Medical Director, and Dr. —, and with others of U. S. A. Medical Corps, as they were hurrying through the town to and from their camps, so that a wise disposal of the supplies soon became a work of time only. The pressing enquiries came from all sides: "Have you stimulants, have you bandages, lint, dressings, splints, sponges, food, anything for the wounded?" and when my affirmative included beef tea, chocolate, and condensed milk, you will appreciate the effect. The "interest of the occasion" was heightened by the fact that the street was crowded with wagon trains, regiments, stragglers, wounded, &c., and my depot generally regarded as a sutler's stand, the consequence being that I was besieged by the rank and file, in very unmilitary confusion, to sell much of what I had, and more of what I had not; of the latter, tobacco, I think, took the lead. To be addressed as a sutler, and asked to *sell* the goods of the Commission, was an opportune joke, relieving the tragedy of the scenes about me.

One melancholy question was asked me: "Have you any chloroform?" No stimulants, no chloroform, at the head-quarters of our army—thirty miles from the unfinished dome of the Capitol! Such are the accidents of war.

Not one of the twenty several kinds of supplies which our wagons took out but was eagerly sought, and did good service in some quarter or other. Every one even of the seventy-five tourniquets we sent was seized as a prize.

Not knowing how our return might be delayed, I retained a few eatables, which were readily disposed of the next morning, before reaching Alexandria, to the wounded and wearied men by the roadside. We were able to take back with us some of the wounded.

Very resp'y yours,

II.

* * * * *

It was the only enjoyment of the day to see how well, and, as a matter of every-day business, the Surgeon-General was providing for them. He started 5,000 convalescents for Northern Hospitals, and in 26 hours every one of them is gone, and with a mattress under him. He got an order for the Capitol 2,000 beds, the upper floor of the Patent-Office 1,000, and thirty or forty churches and dwelling-houses, among them Corcoran's, in Lafayette Square, for Hospitals; sent for his best Army Sur-

geons who were North, and to Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, for sixty more picked citizen volunteers to take charge of them. His accumulation of supplies here enables these Hospitals to be organized quickly, and with little embarrassment.

III.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 8th, '62.

My Dear Sir,—I returned from "Groveton" battle-field at two A. M. yesterday, having spent thirty-six hours of the fifty-six in the saddle. I feel as though I had a chronic horse between my lower limbs. We came in with a train of ambulances containing 500 wounded. The comfort of the poor fellows, and their chances of recovery, were greatly increased by the free use of our Sanitary Commission stores. Before we left the battle-field on Saturday, Dr. Jenkins and I made up fifteen gallons of milk-punch (with condensed milk), and as much beef-tea (with Martinez' beef stock), and when the train halted, every man got as much as he needed of stimulus, concentrated food, &c. The train was admirably managed by Drs. Moore and Woodward, U. S. A. Much of our journey was by moonlight, and the effect of the long line of omnibuses, hacks, and ambulances with their pallid passengers, was most novel. The train reached the Medical Director's office at 2.30 A. M., and in less than an hour the patients were distributed and housed in Hospital. This promptitude and system promise well for the Medical Bureau, and would alone repay us for all our exertions to procure its reform and reorganization.

I should have mentioned, that the Regular medical officers, on the field of battle, cordially acknowledged the aid and comfort they had received from the Commission, in the terrible pressure of their work.

* * * * *

In obedience to the call for help lately issued by the Secretary of War, the New England people sent more than 150 tons of Hospital stores to Washington, consigned to the care of a very high officer of Government. The excellent lady to whom he entrusted their distribution, sent an order to each surgeon in charge of a Hospital in or near Washington, for so many boxes of Hospital stores. One of them showed me his order, and told me he really did not want these stores, for what Government did not supply, the Sanitary Commission did. Miss D—— says, that the Hospital stewards and nurses are having a good time scrambling for the plunder. It is a great pity that the bounty of the people should be thus wasted, when it might be made so much more useful, if dispensed through the

comprehensive organization of the Sanitary Commission. These * *
 * * are another source of extravagant waste and loss. The Army
 would do better without them. What it wants is an organization like the
 Sanitary Commission, that knows nothing of State lines; that recognizes
 only the Nation, and seeks only to aid and support our soldiers, without
 inquiring whether they were mustered into the National service in Maine
 or in Minnesota. * * * *

III.

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I shall go to Rockville, Md., to-day (McClellan's headquarters, as I understand), taking with me four four-horse army wagon-loads of hospital stores. Our U. S. A. medical stores, at Frederick, Md., were all burned when that town was evacuated. I cannot resist the call to labor here in Virginia and Maryland, and, with your approval, I shall endeavor to send large supplies wherever our forces move, and try to have them on the ground *before* a battle.

Tell people not to be disheartened. There may have been mismanagement and blundering, but we shall do well yet, in spite of our failures. Pray do all you can to interest the public in whatever affects the sanitary condition of the army. Disease has disabled ten of our soldiers for every one the rebels have been able to destroy. And, above all things, urge on Government the importance of enforcing vigorous military discipline. Every regimental camp I visit is a mere nursery of disease, because its officers neglect or ignore the U. S. A. regulations they are bound to obey. We cannot hope to see these sanitary regulations enforced under a system of discipline so slack and nerveless as ours. We have been waging war for more than a year, but no sentinel has been shot for sleeping on his post—and far too few officers have been publicly disgraced for inefficiency. It is not surprising that the important sanitary regulations of the service have been neglected, though their neglect has cost us so many thousand lives.

Very cordially yours,

IV.

WASHINGTON, September 7th, 1862.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—

* * * * * We reported to Dr. Coolidge, whom we found standing in an orchard, in the midst of 250 poor fellows lying on the ground, and we all went to work at once. Drs. Jenkins and Smith and myself spent our time in surgical work, and in preparing beef-tea and egg-nogg from the Commission stores brought with us. Everything we brought came into play. From Saturday to Wednesday nearly two thousand of our wounded lay on the battle-field without food or water. Even the surgeons were *starving*. One told me that he was glad to pick up a piece of cracker he found lying in the mud and to eat it. The sufferings of the wounded during this interval were alleviated by a heavy thunder-shower, which gave their lips the only water they tasted. Some of them were taken to farm-houses, some received food from the country people, but *many, very many*, died of starvation and exposure, while * * * * *

Dr. Hammond has worked with great vigor and forethought. His train of forty odd wagons, sent out on Sunday, was captured, and a large amount of medical stores went into rebel hands. He sent out another on Tuesday, which reached the field on Wednesday, carrying food and medical stores. It returned to Washington on Wednesday with 400 wounded. Our new inspector, T. B. Smith, Dr. Steiner, Dr. Chamberlain, and Mr. Elliot, went out to the field on Sunday, and, as I learn, rendered most valuable and self-denying service * * * * *

On my arrival at the field, it at first seemed as though our Sanitary Commission stores would be superfluous, in the midst of the plenty provided by the commissary train. But the result proved far otherwise. We had brought above a barrel of bandages, and as those of the Medical Department soon became exhausted, our stock became the sole reliance. I do not know what the surgeons could have done without them. We had also a barrel of tin cups, a most invaluable addition to the appliances for taking care of the wounded, most of whom had lost their canteens. Last evening I had the exquisite pleasure of seeing gallons of our beef-tea and milk punch dispensed to hundreds of wounded and exhausted men, and of seeing them revive and brighten under the influence of these vitalizing fluids. This was near Benton's tavern, on the Little River Pike, where we halted in the clear moonlight. The Surgeon General, and several of the surgeons on duty, have already expressed their sense of obligation to the Commission. We are working now in perfect harmony with the

medical officers, and there may be danger of our being spoiled by flattery
 * * * * A great battle may be soon expected. Urge our loyal people at the north, to send supplies to the Cooper Institute depot in New York, and to the Philadelphia depot, as fast as possible. Buy as liberally as the state of the treasury will permit. You cannot accumulate too large a stock of clothing, and of hospital supplies of every sort. I should almost advise you to run in debt, if necessary, for I am confident the liberal and patriotic people of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, will carry us through.

Very truly yours,

V.

HAMBURG, Tenn., July 31.

DR. J. S. NEWBERRY:

My Dear Sir,—Since my last letter, written on the *Lancaster*, during the trip previous to this, I have got the business of furnishing the army in this region with sanitary stores once more under way. With the efficient co-operation of Mr. H. Newberry, and the invaluable services rendered by the *Lancaster*, we have a depot established at Columbus, Ky., well manned, but only partially filled with stores.

I have commenced making a rapid inspection of the camps and hospitals of the Western army, exclusive of Buell's army. These inspections, of course, are confined to the needs of the hospitals and number of sick. I have visited all the general and post hospitals between Columbus and Corinth, (on the line of railroad) and those in the vicinity of the latter place.

At Columbus there are 85 sick.

At Jackson, 150.

At Corinth, 250.

At Dr. Bryan's hospital, general hospital for Rosecranz's corps, 1,000.

Hospitals for Gen. Ogleby's division, 150.

This is as far as my inspections have extended up to date, and is a very good showing as to the health of troops in the field compared with any up to previous three or four months. I have examined a considerable list of Surgeon's reports for the last fortnight, at Dr. McDougal's office, Corinth, and they exhibit uniformly a decrease in the percentage of sickness since April. In many of them, however, sickness is announced to be on the increase for the time being. Diarrhea, remittent and typhoid fevers, are the prevailing forms of disease, as they have been for several months. Scurvy is also considerably prevalent.

Sanitary stores are quite exhausted in nearly the whole section. A partial substitute for many articles of diet has been found in an unusual abundance of berries during the season for them. But these are rapidly disappearing, and the demand for canned fruits will soon be keenly felt again. Vegetables and butter are especially scarce. The region furnishes small quantities of these, but they are held at high rates, and the butter is atrocious in quality. Drawers are in universal and clamorous demand. No hospital has the half it needs of this article, and many have none. Bedding is tolerably abundant. Cots or bedsteads have been scarce, but the Purveyor's Department is now becoming rapidly supplied with them.

On the whole, a lull in the vigorous sympathies at home which have so long furnished vast, varied, and invaluable relief to the sick in the field, falls with peculiar misfortune upon those who are still on that list. One may say that whilst the quantity of needs has greatly diminished, the intensity remains the same. The need of drawers and palatable food is felt quite the same, whether the victim be the only sick or the only surviving member of the human family.

In the hospitals mentioned above, funds have accumulated to some extent, and such articles as butter and green vegetables could be readily purchased were they more accessible. I have proffered my assistance in procuring these to surgeons in charge of hospital to the utmost, compatible with my other duties. The commissary of Dr. Bryan's hospital has arranged with Mr. H. Newberry and myself to purchase these with such regularity as the trips of the *Lancaster* will allow, have them delivered at our depot in Columbus, Ky., and forwarded thence to their destination. The relations of the boat to the service enable us to accomplish this with proximate regularity, entire security, and with promptness and economy. Other hospitals, on learning of this plan, will doubtless solicit similar favors, and one foresees at a glance that we may be easily and speedily overburdened with the business. But "sufficient unto the day," &c. I propose to mention the arrangement to all whom it may concern, and accede to all requests that may spring therefrom, until it becomes impossible to do more. By or before that time Government officials will take the hint from the plan furnished, and agencies will doubtless be established for getting such supplies as hospital funds can procure.

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I will endeavor to keep you posted from time to time as to my labors and success, or the want thereof, as the case may be.

Meanwhile I remain, yours truly,

H. A. WARRINER, M. D.,
Inspector.

VI.

SANITARY COMMISSION,
244 F Street, Washington,
Sept. 11, 1862. }

My Dear Doctor :

I returned last evening from the front, having left the Maryland army moving toward the Monocacy River in such manner as to shut the fords of the Potomac against the return of the rebels, and to cover Baltimore. McClellan's head-quarters are at Rockville, eighteen miles from Washington. Frederick is the point toward which he is slowly moving. I say slowly, because there is as yet no forced marching, though the *impedimenta* have been largely sent to the rear. I saw our army march out of Rockville yesterday in three columns, one by the road, and one on either side through the fields—a magnificent sight. I rode on Gen. ———'s staff, taking cornfields and barn-yards and woods *en route*, a corps of pioneers going in advance, and removing fences and other obstacles. I went to the front to organize a more perfect system of supply and distribution of Sanitary Commission stores, and have succeeded, I think, in doing so. We have now two two-horse wagons with supplies, moving with the advance column of the army, with orders to keep close up with the line of battle. Dr. Chamberlain is with one of these, and Dr. Andrews with the other. Smith is to relieve Chamberlain. I have also sent out some four-horse army wagons, laden with supplies from our Washington depot, under charge of Mr. Mitchell, with orders to move a mile or two in the rear of the line of battle. I say "line of battle," because the army is now moving and camping always in line of battle. Our Inspectors in the advance are instructed to go through the divisions and brigades, and distribute their stores on the requisition of the army medical officers, not only to sick men but to the feeble and weary. Some of the regiments have lived so long on hard bread, coffee, &c., that they are asthenic. Our Inspectors in the advance draw on Mitchell's army wagons, and thus keep their two-horse wagons constantly full. As soon as the army wagons are exhausted, others will be in place, with stores from our Washington depot, and I think our resources will thus be effectively applied. Mr. Knapp and Dr. Jenkins approve the plan, and I respectfully submit it to the Executive Committee. I wish we could afford to keep such an organization moving with every army corps—a depot on wheels, fed from stationary depots. * * *

Ever yours,

C. R. AGNEW.

Dr. W. H. VAN BUREN,
N. Y.

VII.

SANITARY COMMISSION,
Adams' House, 244 F Street,
Washington, D. C., Sept. 12th, 1862.

GEORGE T. STRONG, Esq.

Dear Sir,—Your letter of September 10th, has but this moment come to hand.

Supplies, demands, and distributions were never greater than now. It would moisten the eyes, and bless the hearts, and strengthen the hands of all who send on these comforts for the soldiers, if they could see for but one day, one-tenth the suffering and the gratitude of the poor fellows who are helped by us.

Yesterday we sent supplies, in answer to requisitions, to thirty-three Hospitals and regiments, in bulk amounting probably to the full of fifteen army wagons; this, besides supplies sent to the front, and comforts distributed to the Home. The Home and the Lodge are together sheltering and feeding 130 or 140 each night. Among them have been a large number who came in almost destitute of clothing. Mr. Fowler, my assistant in Special Relief, is occupied from morning to night in helping men who are sick and weak, to obtain their pay and their pension papers, and to get comfortably started for home. The number of poor fellows who need kindly help of this sort is sad to see, sick or wounded, or broken down by the recent terrible struggles and exposures.

While I write, a messenger from the front has come in for supplies, who says that our wagons, the other night, rescued some fifty or sixty men, sick and half starved, found on the road.

Yours,

F. N. KNAPP.